

The importance of being tech-savvy

Author: Learn digital ways or 'fall behind the curve'

By Richard Lee

Assistant Business Editor

Robert Dilenschneider has become adept at using his BlackBerry. The communications device is always at the Darien resident's side when he is on one of his many global journeys.

Mastering new technology is one of the messages the founder of The Dilenschneider Group, a New York City corporate consulting and public relations firm, delivers in his latest book, "Power and Influence, The Rules Have Changed," published by McGraw Hill and scheduled for release this month.

Successful businesses depend on a tech-savvy work force with in-depth experience. Employees who combine both on their resume provide real value to a company, according to Dilenschneider, who founded his firm after 25 years at Hill & Knowlton, where he spent his final six years as president and chief executive officer.

"People over 40 know how to develop content, but they must understand technology," said Dilenschneider, the author of 14 books relating to the intricacies of doing business. "If you don't understand technology, you fall behind the curve."

Technology allows individuals to serve their clients better and improve their business opportunities. It also has "leveled the playing field," according to Dilenschneider, letting more people deliver opinions, share knowledge and gain power through persuasion.

Nearly anyone can pursue



Staff file photo

Robert Dilenschneider of Darien, founder and chief executive officer of The Dilenschneider Group, is the author of a new book, 'Power and Influence, The Rules Have Changed.'

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power and influence through the use of cyberspace, according to Dilenschneider.

His message hit home with Ken Lempit, president of the Austin Lawrence Group, a Stamford advertising and public relations firm that has embraced technology.

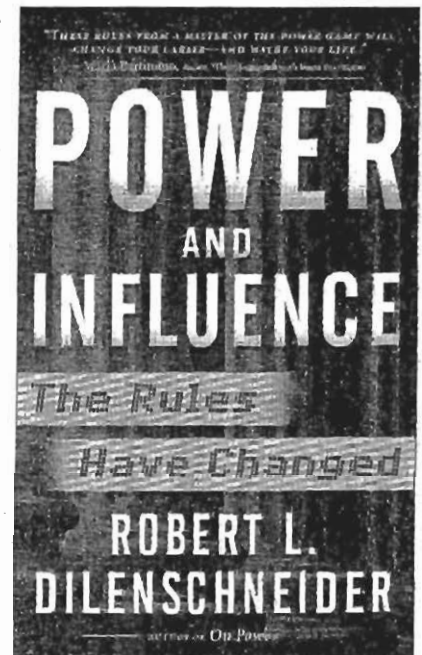
"Relevancy is the coin of the realm in the workplace. You need to speak the language of your peers. You can capitalize on your experience if you have technology skills that show like a young Turk," said Lempit, president of the Fairfield County Public Relations Association.

"You've got to adapt. You have to be willing to start over and re-pot yourself," said Dilenschneider, who did exactly that when he left Hill & Knowlton 16 years ago.

Dilenschneider sought a new challenge, moving from a marquee business with several thousand employees to a boutique with a staff of 65 troubleshooters for companies needing critical advice.

"Starting over, you have to learn how important it is to be hungry," Dilenschneider said. "Clients pay for experience, not enthusiasm. They want people who have seen the movie several times."

His book, broken into 10 message points, details the impact of digital communications on business, politics, economic growth and education. It also offers direction on how people can live their own lives with personal happiness, financial security and professional success.



Dilenschneider, who has a bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in journal-

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ism from Ohio State University, believes the book is a primer for new college graduates embarking on careers in the business world.

It is being promoted through a marketing campaign at coffee shops near 11 selected colleges across the country. Paper sleeves advertising the book are being slipped around coffee cups.

fee cups.

"I want to see how the book sells on the college campuses," Dilenschneider said, adding that it also will be marketed heavily at East Coast business shuttle airports.

Dilenschneider has such a grasp on societal, economic and global issues that his message demands to be embraced, according to Marven Moss,

a longtime acquaintance and veteran public relations consultant.

"He shows the direct nexus of all these advancements and how they can be used to promote brand imaging," he said. "He's been a major influence in public relations."

Dilenschneider in his writings has developed an impressive grasp of how power, ethics and

influence impacts individuals and their place in the corporate world and society, said Herb Schaffner, publisher of McGraw-Hill Business.

"I've known of Bob's reputation and his record of achievement for a long time. I've always wanted to publish a book with him," Schaffner said. "With his background and career, we know people listen."